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HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

Letter dated 27 October 1995 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the Istanbul Appeal approved by the participants of the special session of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Symposium on Tolerance devoted to the theme of "Religions and Tolerance", held at Istanbul from 4 to 6 October 1995 (see annex).

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 112 (b).

(Signed) Hüseyin E. ÇELEM
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

ANNEX

Istanbul Appeal, approved by the participants in the Symposium on Tolerance held at Istanbul from 4 to 6 October 1995

Meeting at the UNESCO Symposium on Tolerance held at Istanbul from 4 to 6 October 1995, and considering

- That religion must under no circumstances be perceived as a barrier to tolerance, but on the contrary be seen as a field of action for the free conscience of each individual in the search for truth,

- That today, thanks to progress in communications, the world has become a global village in which cultures are no longer isolated,

- That mutual knowledge of the various religions, in particular Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and also the traditional African, Amerindian and Asian religions, in a spirit of mutual understanding is necessary to peace,

- That alliance between human beings should be built, not on the supremacy of one over the other, but on cordial and spontaneous relationships, reflecting the spiritual nature of mankind,

- That one enemy of peace is integrism, which is the product of the ignorance, poverty and aggression imposed by certain aspects of modernity, and that the only means of combating it are recognition of and respect for other persons, the establishment of social justice and of an adequate system of education,

- That permanent contact and dialogue are imperative at all levels in order to resolve conflicts and avoid recourse to methods which are the source of increased suffering and hostility,

Hoping

- That religious institutions will function in accordance with the traditions and requirements of the rule of law, and that they will enjoy freedom of action in the mutual respect of their plural reality,

We commit ourselves

- To ensuring that our religious institutions act as an inspiration for peace and understanding among all human beings,

- To ensuring respect for diversity of beliefs,

- To cooperating with UNESCO on behalf of education in tolerance.

We invite political authorities and the media, and appeal to world public opinion, to ensure that freedom of conscience and of religion is respected

everywhere. We address all religious leaders in the hope that they, too, will help in promoting observance of the foregoing principles, which provide a foundation for mutual love and understanding among all the inhabitants of our planet.